

MEETING THE NEEDS OF A CHANGING POPULATION DIVERSITY ENRICHES OUR COMMUNITY

By Mayor Gene Winstead

OUR COMMUNITY IS DIVERSE IN MANY ways. We have a variety of businesses ranging from the world-renowned Mall of America to the neighborhood retail store. Our housing stock swings from thousands of post-World War II homes to new energy-efficient residential towers. Bloomington’s parks vary from neighborhood playlots to a new urban park near a light rail transit line. See page 4.

Our population is also becoming increasingly diverse. The last census showed the median age for Bloomington residents was 40 years. Racial ethnic groups represented 13 percent of the population in 2000, an increase from 3.3 percent in 1980. The Bloomington School District reports that 34 percent of its students in 2006 were from non-Caucasian heritages and they predict that by 2013, that number will rise to 50 percent. Today, 76 languages are spoken by enrolled students.

The City has been working on a strategic plan to guide the community into this diverse future. Imagine Bloomington 2025 has provided insights to the needs of the community in relation to our changing demographics. An older population, fewer households with children and smaller families will determine future housing needs. Convenient and sustainable transportation alternatives that include pedestrian- and bike-friendly routes and improved public transit will be important. Park facilities and recreational programs will continue to adapt to the diverse needs of these future residents.

As a result of feedback regarding people and culture in Bloomington, the Human Rights Commission and Human Services Division explore additional ways to build trust, understanding and relationships. During the **week of September 17**, a traveling exhibit produced by Soka Gakkai International - USA, *Building a Culture of Peace for the Children of the World*, will be displayed in the lobby of Bloomington Civic Plaza, 1800 W. Old Shakopee Road.

Recognizing the rich variety within our community brings opportunities to reach out to our neighbors. This wide array of culture and art also brings exciting exposure to new ideas. As the City develops long-term goals for 2025, we will work to preserve the diversity of our businesses, housing and residents and look at how City services will adapt to better meet those needs.



Bloomington’s variety of businesses, housing, parks and transportation reflects the diversity of its citizens.



BUILDING TRUST, UNDERSTANDING AND RELATIONSHIPS SERVICES THAT MEET RESIDENTS’ NEEDS

For more information on these services and opportunities, call Human Services at 952-563-4957.

- **Cross-Cultural Conversations** – Help is available to facilitate conversations between community groups that wish to increase understanding about another culture.
- **Speakers Bureau** – Human Services maintains a list of individuals and organizations that can speak to your group on general characteristics of various cultural groups. Workshops and trainings are arranged directly between you and the speaker of your choice.
- **City services** – Support is available for people with limited English. Translation and interpretation services are available upon request.



MEET NEW LEADER OF PUBLIC WORKS KEEL ON BOARD AS THE DEPARTMENT’S DIRECTOR

KARL KEEL began as Public Works Director in May, replacing Charlie Honchell who retired in April.

Keel was Public Works Director for the cities of Shoreview (1992 - 1994) and Roseville (1994 - 2001). He was also Roseville’s Assistant Public Works Director (1988 - 1992). Since 2001, Keel

has been Vice President and Director of Infrastructure Engineering for URS Corporation in Minneapolis. He said he is looking forward to working in local government again.

“I really enjoy the wider range of projects, community service and development of long-term relationships that working in the public sector brings,” Keel said.

Keel is familiar with many major projects in Bloomington. While at URS, he worked with the City on American

Boulevard, the Lyle Berg Bridge, Mall of America’s Phase II infrastructure and improvements to Lyndale Avenue between 80th Street and I-494.

“I feel great about coming to Bloomington,” Keel said. “It’s a large community with a variety of things happening. The City and Public Works Department have great reputations.”

Keel holds a B.S. degree in civil engineering and a bachelor’s of architecture from the University of Minnesota.

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The City of Bloomington complies with all applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its services, programs, or activities. Upon request, accommodation will be provided to allow individuals with disabilities to participate in all City of Bloomington services, programs, and activities. The City has designated coordinators to facilitate compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), and to coordinate compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as mandated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development regulations. For more information, contact the Human Services Division, City of Bloomington, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road, Bloomington, MN 55431-3027; (952)563-8733 (Voice); 952-563-8740 (TTY).

Upon request, this information can be available in Braille, large print, audio tape and/or electronic format.